

Foreign Affairs: How James Bond Got Started

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PARIS — "Any fiction spy story you have ever read pales in comparison with Oleg Penkovsky's dramatic account of his extraordinary personal adventure," says the advertisement of an American best seller. Simultaneously, English readers are offered memoirs called "Spy" by a Soviet agent known in London as Gordon Lonsdale until his arrest for espionage and really named Konon Trofimovich Molodiy. Molodiy-Lonsdale was subsequently exchanged for Greville Wynne, a British associate of Penkovsky imprisoned in the U.S.S.R. Wynne has not yet published a book.

A C.I.A. Product?

Victor Zorza, the (Manchester) Guardian's Kremlinologist, believes "the Penkovsky papers" are not "wholly genuine." He contends no Russian text has been produced and the English version is "peppered with words and phrases no man with Penkovsky's Soviet background would use." Zorza adduces errors in dates and "facts," asserting much of Penkovsky's memoir must have been written "by a Western pen." He concludes, "The book can have been compiled only by the Central Intelligence Agency."

The genesis of Penkovsky's "papers" seems valid but whether part of the work is fake cannot be judged. What-

ever its origin, the work provides juicy reading and embarrasses Moscow just as Lonsdale's possibly spurious work embarrasses Washington. Penkovsky was undoubtedly an efficient Western agent in the Soviet hierarchy where his boss was Kosygin's son-in-law. After Penkovsky's arrest in 1962, almost 300 Soviet intelligence officers were recalled as intelligence networks were overhauled.

Spies, Forgeries and Fakes

The period since World War II has been gaudy with spies, forgeries and fakes. Indeed some spies have been widely publicized — like Colonel Rudolf Abel, traded for U-2 pilot Gary Powers; Lonsdale; Ivan Egorov, a Soviet official in the U.N.; Giuseppe Martelli, an Italian who spied for Moscow in hollow-heeled shoes; Burgess, Maclean and Philby, who skipped to Russia when their cover wore thin.

Yet intelligence services don't limit themselves to ferreting out secrets; they calumniate each other whenever possible. Moscow's K.G.B. has its "disinformation" section with a subsidiary branch in East Germany that disseminates false papers. Some of these have included crude "documents" bearing U.S. Cabinet or C.I.A. "signatures."

Four years ago the C.I.A. claimed it had uncovered 32 such forgeries in four years. British counter-intelligence is equally alert. Some "docu-

ments" are sold and others merely given to naive newsmen.

The befuddled public derives particular entertainment from the cold war's fake literary productions. Among these Professor Paul W. Blackstock of the University of South Carolina lists: the purported diary of Maxim Litvinov, late Soviet Foreign Minister; the strategic thesis of Marshal Bulganin; "memoirs" of General Vlassov, who organized an army of Russian prisoners for Hitler and was later hanged; and two volumes of fascinating recollections by a nonexistent nephew of Stalin, Budu Svanidze.

Excellent works in this category—including those of Litvinov and "Svanidze"—were apparently manufactured in Paris by the literary atelier of a refugee Soviet diplomat named Grigori Bessedovsky. In 1929 Bessedovsky, then counselor at the Russian Embassy in Paris, sought political asylum.

Written for Idiots

According to Blackstock, Bessedovsky, a gentleman of talent and imagination, once wrote a fellow émigré from Poland: "Sir, I write books for idiots. Do you imagine that anyone in the West would read what you call my apocryphal works if, in quoting Kaganovich, Zhukov, Mikoyan or Bulganin, I tried to be faithful to the manner, sense and form of their speeches?"

"But when I portray Stalin or Molotov in pyjamas, when I tell the dirtiest possible stories about them—never mind whether they are true or invented—rest assured that not only all intellectuals will read me, but also the most important capitalist statesman, on his way to a peace conference, will pick up my book before going to sleep in his pulman. . . . Allah has given money to the stupid in order that the intelligent can live easily."

Facts, fiction, half-truths and distortions are mixed together in the strange game played by competing intelligence services and ambitious entrepreneurs. When an American military attaché in Moscow lost his diary, Russian security officials published it with falsified inserts such as: "War! As soon as possible. Now!"

Some Experts Fooled

Among amateur factories, Bessedovsky's ranks high. He fooled some of the most pretentious Kremlinologists. Even General Bedell Smith, former U.S. Ambassador to Moscow and C.I.A. boss, was persuaded to write an "introductory note" for the highly suspect Litvinov "memoirs."

Penkovsky and Molodiy may be genuine authors but, at any rate, the late Ian Fleming had many unannounced anonymous cold war competitors. Like Fleming's works, they are pleasant bedside reading.